

Officials Appreciation Week Profile:

Sandra Givas

Sandra Givas tried many sports growing up, but gymnastics was the one that became a favorite.

It's also the one that she could never let go of, which is why she is still involved today as an official.

"My passion for athletics has been there since I was a young child," she said. "I tried different sports, but being upside down and flipping was my favorite. My parents quickly learned that gymnastics was my real love."

And with that early introduction, a fulfilling career was under way.

"Loving the practice and competitive world, I took to competition at the age of five and continued straight through college," Sandra said. "Knowing I had to stay involved with gymnastics, my sister and friend introduced me to officiating high school sports in 1983. My love for officiating has only grown since then."

Aside from her own work as an official, Sandra also serves as a NJSIAA assignor, which broadens her role in the sport.

Getting to know NJSIAA sports official Sandra Givas:

What do you do in your job as an assignor?

"As the Assignor for the sectional and state gymnastics tournaments, I have the privilege of working with the chapter presidents to identify those interested and qualified for officiating the tournaments. Assigning them, while building strong panels at each tournament location, and each event, is something I truly love, and I hope to make all the officials happy with their postseason assignments. I love attending the tournaments to be there and support the officials and other meet officials as much as I possibly can."

What do you enjoy most about being an official?

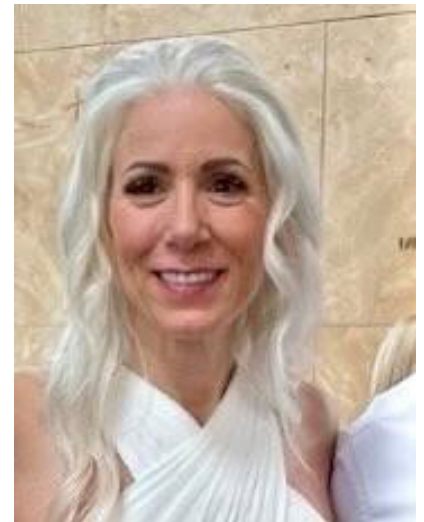
"What I most love is the involvement with the sport and the student athletes. In addition, working with so many wonderful professionals that enjoy the sport, just as much, brings me great happiness."

Do you have a favorite memory from officiating an event?

"I don't have one favorite memory, I have many. Whatever the level of the sport, it's pure joy to see the student athlete succeed, or overcome, a challenging performance."

What's the best part about any given day of officiating?

"The best part of any given day of officiating is being involved with the most wonderful sport in the world... Gymnastics. Having the opportunity to watch all the participants, including coaches, trainers and parents,



also enjoy the sport as much as I do is truly a blessing. In addition, working with my fellow colleagues is one of my favorite things. So many wonderful and lifelong friendships have been built and are cherished.”

Do you have any memories from your first meet as an official?

“The only memories from my very first high school officiating experience are that I was very nervous and excited. That excitement has continued throughout the years and never diminishes.”

Do you have a particular funny memories of an interaction between yourself and an athlete or coach?

“One of the funniest things I remember involved a young lady tripping during her floor exercise routine. She was not hurt. She started laughing, and all her team members, coaches, and the other team members were laughing so hard, no matter how hard I tried not to laugh... In the end the entire gym was laughing together. This beautiful young lady, who had to laugh at herself, and in the end, took a bow.”

What do you feel is the biggest misconception about the job of being an official?

“The biggest misconception about the job of being official is that we don’t want to see the student athletes succeed. I believe all officials want to see the athletes, experience joy and success. No matter what, the officials don’t look for things to decrease scores, we’re always looking for an opportunity to give the athlete the benefit of the doubt and reward them for their performance.”

What would you say to anyone thinking about becoming an official?

“If you’re thinking about becoming a high school official in New Jersey, please do it. I promise it will be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life and keep you connected to a sport/sports that you love with a passion. In addition, you’ll build lifelong friendships with some amazing, compassionate, funny, intelligent, loving people. Officiating is truly a joy in my life.”



***Think you might be interested in becoming a high school sports official?
Check out this link to learn more: <https://www.njsiaa.org/officials/become-official>***